

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-8 are pending herein. Claim 1 has been amended as supported by Figs. 1(a) and 1(b), for example. Claims 2 and 3 have been amended to correct matters of form.

Examiner Del Sole is thanked for courtesies extended to Applicants' undersigned representative during a telephonic interview on April 12, 2005. During the interview, Examiner Del Sole tentatively agreed that the above-outlined amendments to claim 1 would overcome the rejections of record. Examiner Del Sole did, however, reserve his final decision in this case pending the results of an updated search.

1. The rejection of claims 3-4 and 7-8 under §112, second paragraph are noted, but deemed moot in view of the rewritten claims submitted above.
2. Claims 1-4 were rejected under §102(b) over Horikawa, and claims 1-3 were rejected under §102(b) over Yorita. To the extent that these rejections may be applied against the amended claims, they are respectfully traversed.

As amended, claim 1 recites an apparatus for manufacturing a honeycomb structure having slits and a plurality of arrays of numerous cells aligned in parallel, the slits communicating with external space and being formed along the cell arrays. The apparatus includes an extruder having an extruding die and a slit forming apparatus including at least two slit forming members extending parallel to each other. The slit forming members are capable of moving during extrusion, are arranged near the extruding die, and protrude along arrays of a molded article being extruded in which slits are to be formed.

Figs. 4a, 4b and 5 of Horikawa show one forming member. Therefore, Horikawa fails to show the feature of claim 1 that at least two slit forming members extend parallel to each other and protrude along arrays of a molded article. Since claims 2-4 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, those claims are also believed to be allowable over the applied art.

Column 4, lines 6-12 and Figs. 5-7 of Yorita disclose the use of a member that forms an uninterrupted slit that extends for the entire distance of a honeycomb structure. Applicants believe the member is a fixed part of the extrusion die itself. Therefore, Yorita fails to show the feature of having slit forming members capable of

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moving during extrusion, as recited in claim 1. Since claims 2-3 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, those claims are also believed to be allowable over the applied art.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §102(b) rejections over Horikawa and Yorita are respectfully requested.

3. Claims 5-8 were rejected under §103(a) over Horikawa. Applicants respectfully submit that the arguments submitted above distinguish claim 1 from Horikawa. Since claims 5-8 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, claims 5-8 are also believed to be allowable over the applied art.

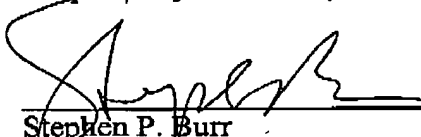
If Examiner Del Sole believes that contact with Applicants' attorney would be advantageous toward the disposition of this case, he is herein requested to call Applicants' attorney at the phone number noted below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1446.

May 2, 2005

Date

Respectfully submitted,



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